

# fps

frames per second magazine

## Anime

Magical girls

Final Fantasy VII

Negadon

Cinema Anime

## Interview

Adam Parrish King on  
*The Wraith of  
Cobble Hill*

## Also

Dream On Silly  
Dreamer

Plymptoons

The Art of Cars



## Giant Robo

We spotlight one of anime's most ambitious OAV series, starring a boy and his robot

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This is the light edition of *fps* magazine. Most of the magazine's pages are available only as thumbnails, to give you an overview of this issue's content. You can download the full version of the magazine, complete with high-resolution, print-quality graphics, for only \$1.49. Just click on this button anywhere in the magazine:

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# Anime's Big Picture

**Emru Townsend** on the further perils of trying to define anime

When we put together our first anime-centered issue, the underlying theme was based on a question: what is anime? It's a simple question, but like many simple questions, it has many possible answers—some of them not quite so simple.

The question concerns us most outside of Asia because we experience anime as an alternative to other forms of animation and pop culture; we aren't immersed in it from a cultural or entertainment standpoint.

Often, this leads to a filtering effect: we see only a certain slice of anime in a certain context, and we extrapolate from that to determine what all anime must be like. Anime fans have witnessed the dark side of this effect many times over. In an editorial for the print edition of *fps* ten years ago, I wrote about an *Indianapolis Star* story that breathlessly reported on a woman accidentally stumbling on a late-night airing of *Crying Freeman*. That she was surprised at its content is fair; many people still can't get past the idea of cartoons for the over-twelve set. But the third paragraph in the article reads: "This style of Japanese animation—aggressive style, bright colors, often comparatively graphic depictions of violence and sexuality—is called anime (pronounced 'Anny May')."

And there you have it: from a limited sample comes a broad, inaccurate description. While there's generally more awareness of Japanese animation now than in 1996, these things do still happen. Most chilling was a recent gaffe here in Canada: in February, the Canadian National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre had a fact sheet on its website describing anime as "adult oriented material that contains scenes depicting sexual acts"—an error encouraged and compounded by limited research.

It's easy to write this off as ignorance on the part of certain reporters, and many people do. But fans themselves have long been guilty of blinkered viewpoints themselves. It used to be common to hear that anime was predominantly science-fiction and/or featured giant robots. It's still common to hear fans excitedly state that anime is more adult than American animation or has superior production qualities.

That, again, is the filtering effect at work. Back when most of the anime coming into North America was bootlegged, anime fandom was tightly linked to science-fiction fandom, and videocassettes were expensive. So if you had a contact in Japan and were limited in how much could be recorded off the

airwaves, what were you going to ask for? *Mobile Suit Gundam* or *Red-Haired Anne* (an anime adaptation of *Anne of Green Gables*)?

The recent surge in anime titles being released on television and directly to DVD has helped to expand people's awareness of anime's diversity, but even then the distribution companies have settled into certain categories—a significant one being, naturally, science fiction. Critics and film scholars tend to limit their focus to theatrical anime, straying to OAVs (original animation videos) and TV series only for exceptional titles like *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *Cowboy Bebop*.

While the increased attention paid to anime is welcome, it's important to bear in mind that its range of subject matter is wider still than what we see here. Acknowledging that range grounds anime somewhat, and incidentally forces the medium's boosters to recognize that there are simplistic children's programs, knockoffs, merchandising cash cows and copycats, just like here. We'll never really experience anime the same way as someone living in Japan, but presenting a more honest and complete context for what we do see over here closes the gap considerably. ■

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the magazine of animation

## EDITORIAL

**Editor** Emru Townsend  
**Copyeditor** Tamu Townsend  
**Contributors** Madeline Ashby, Jeff Boman, Aaron H. Bynum, Noell Wolfram Evans, Jake Friedman, Marc Hairston, Melissa D. Johnson, Mark Mayerson, Jeremy Schwartz, Ravi Swami, Jason Vanderhill, René Walling, Jennifer Wand, Ceri Young

**Layout** Emru Townsend

**Cover Image** Still from *Giant Robo*

## SPECIAL THANKS

Ken Clark, Dave "Grue" DeBry, Adam Parrish King, Dan Lund, Vicky Vriniotis, Tony West

## CONTACT US

**Phone** (514) 696-2153  
**E-Mail** [editor@fpsmagazine.com](mailto:editor@fpsmagazine.com)  
**Web** [www.fpsmagazine.com](http://www.fpsmagazine.com)  
**Ad Sales** [ads@fpsmagazine.com](mailto:ads@fpsmagazine.com)

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# Dream On Silly Dreamer

Written by **Jake Friedman**

In 2002, Walt Disney Feature Animation shut down its Burbank traditional animation studio in favour of focusing solely on a new CG department. This was the studio that Walt himself built and which had produced classics since 1937's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Soon after the studio shut down, the studios in Orlando, Paris, Tokyo and Sydney all followed suit, laying off more than 1,300 people.

The funny thing is, there was very little commotion in the press about the layoffs, an issue that would surely have left a bad taste in the mouths of the public, who had grown up with the classic films. Then the animators noticed that the few blurbs to reach the papers were describing the halt in traditional animation as only temporary.

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In chronicling the last days of Walt Disney Feature Animation's traditional animation studio, director Dan Lund created a time capsule of the Disney studio. Lund and producer Tony West tell how the documentary came to be.

# Adam Parrish King in Conversation

Interview by **Jason Vanderhill**

## Imagine making an animated short film.

By "animated," I mean traditional stop-motion with puppets of wire, latex and clay. By "short," I mean total running time, not necessarily the length of time it takes to complete the film. And by "film," I mean actual 16mm black and white film from a Bolex camera. Now let's say you took some good advice from your spouse, and you submitted your film (just in time) to a prestigious independent film festival like Sundance. And let's suppose your film was accepted into the festival lineup—no small feat!

Next, you make every arrangement necessary to finalize your production, you pack up your promotional material, you gather your entourage (or close friends and family), and you head for the picturesque landscape of Park City, Utah. After years of solitary

production, followed by a flurry of last-minute activity, you finally get to sit back and enjoy your film as it was meant to be seen—on a big screen in a theatre full of movie fans. That is a very condensed and somewhat paraphrased account of Adam Parrish King, who took home a Sundance jury prize in short filmmaking for *The Wraith of Cobble Hill* earlier this year. The film student completed his thesis project for his master of fine arts degree at University of Southern California (USC) and has turned it into a festival favourite. I spoke to him recently to gather some of the details of his story.

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The resurgence of the art of stop-motion seems to show no sign of abatement, as Adam Parrish King's *The Wraith of Cobble Hill* garners acclaim and festival awards. In this interview, King relates how he came to intimately understand the 90% perspiration/10% inspiration axiom.

# The Anime Primer

Written by **Jennifer Wand**

Several years ago, I sat down to watch Saturday morning cartoons when I came across a blond girl with startlingly big, shimmering eyes. I thought the art was beautiful, but within a few minutes I realized there was something special about this show. The girl had vulnerabilities and weaknesses; she had a past; she was not just another superhero. The girl was Sailor Moon—and I was a new recruit to the army of fans of Japanese animation, also known as anime.

Since my first exposure to the medium, anime has exploded in popularity. Nearly all networks that show animation have at least one anime show in their lineups; books on how to draw in the unique style are being penned; even some American animation programs are mimicking the style. But all of this merely skims the surface. For those

of you interested in diving a little deeper, here's a primer on this ever-more-popular form of entertainment and art.

## Something for Everyone

Most of the anime that becomes popular in the West comes from *manga*, or Japanese comics. Some anime, of course, are original creations, and some derive from other sources, such as novels or video games. But the great majority of them spring from manga, which pervade Japanese society to a much greater extent than comics do here. Usually, the successful anime come from *shoujo* (girls') or *shounen* (boys') manga—the creative playground of romance, science fiction, adventure and comedy that is targeted toward teens in Japan but receives a much more diverse audience here. There is manga as well as anime for younger children

(*kodomo*) and adults (*otona*), but a great deal of it does not become popular here. Perhaps that's because the children's shows tend to lack the character development, and the adult ones the imagination, of the *shoujo* and *shounen* derivatives.

Part of that imagination is the wide variety of subgenres. While here, comics are mostly superhero fare for boys or *Archie*-style schoolyard romances for girls, the manga world is more diverse. In one manga magazine, which is as thick as a phone book, you can find stories that run the gamut. Which isn't to say that anime doesn't have its clichés. You'll run into these gimmicks time and time again:

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Ever stood in front of a display case full of anime DVDs and felt like you were trying to read a foreign language? Well, you were kinda right. Here's a starter guide to Japan's most prominent cultural export.

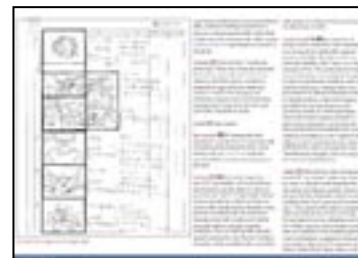
# The Anime Lexicon

Written by **Jennifer Wand**, **Marc Hairston** and **Emru Townsend**

**afureko** 🇯🇵 Derived from “after-record.” Anime studios usually produce the animation before recording the voices. Voice actors have to time their performances by watching the complete animation on a screen during the recording session. See also: *purireko*.

**bishie** 🇺🇸 A slang corruption of *bishounen*, typically used by younger English-speaking fans to describe attractive anime men. Unlike a classic bishounen, which refers to a certain type of character, a bishie can be any attractive male, no matter how manly he may be.

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Reading about anime for the first time can be bewildering, which isn't surprising: not only are half the terms you encounter in another language, half of those have had their meanings corrupted over time.

This guide will help you make sense of what you read and hear about anime. We've even indicated where terms might have different meanings between Japan and English speakers.

# Anime Iconography 101

Written by **Jeff Boman** and **Jennifer Wand**

**As Westerners, when we see a cartoon character's eyes grow wide and pop out.** This isn't because real people's eyes usually pop out of their heads, of course. But it makes sense to us due to iconography, a sort of visual code language that lets us know through simple images how characters are feeling. North America has one such language, but Japan has another, and some of the iconography in anime may slip past a viewer who's not familiar with it.

Historically, anime was made with a lower budget and fewer resources than American animation. Visual cues saved the resources to animate a character in full, but they also created a unique iconography. If you watch a lot of anime, you'll see these shortcuts used with great frequency. They don't appear in everything, but they do show up in enough works to make them an iconic tradition.

**Anime Iconography 101 is all about age.** Unlike North American animation, where the character design is generally consistent throughout the production, some anime use a great variety of styles within the same work. The level of "cartoonishness" of a character's features depends on that character's age—both physical and emotional.



**Younger characters** have a greater chance of facial features that are very simply drawn, with a tiny nose and mouth, large eyes, and a rounded face on what is sometimes an uncommonly large head. Young characters may also have two or three vertical lines on the apples of the cheeks to indicate the rosy-cheeked freshness of youth.



**Teenagers** seem to possess the icons most associated with anime: often they are shown with large eyes, with spiky hair positioned in an unusual fashion. An example is Yugi from *Yu-Gi-Oh*. Teenagers are frequently the main characters of anime, and they are depicted with the greatest emotional range. To that end, their features are most likely to fluctuate between realistic and more iconic portrayals.



**Adults** are more likely to have proportional features, but depending on the mood of the story, they may also become disproportionate at moments of emotion. One good measure of a character's emotional stability is how often his or her features bend or grow unnaturally. **Elders** are often portrayed using elements that are the inverse of young people's features: they often have small, round eyes to go with small forms. ■



# Bewitched by Magical Girls

Written by **Melissa Johnson**

**In the late 1960s, Toei Animation was the top animation studio in Japan**, providing extremely popular titles for boys such as *Journey to the West*, by legendary manga author Osamu Tezuka, and *Ken, the Wild Boy*. Regardless of their success, however, the studios noticed a large audience that remained untapped. While Japan's little boys were following the adventures of Son Goku and Ken, Japan's little girls were largely ignored by the anime industry, and were staying up past their bedtimes to watch Japanese-dubbed broadcasts of the American TV sitcom *Bewitched*.

*Giant Robo* creator Mitsuteru Yokoyama noticed this trend of feminine interest, and in 1966, *Sally the Witch* was born. *Sally the Witch* was not only the first *shoujo* (girls') anime

to be aired on television, it also marked the beginning of what would become the top-selling subgenre of Japanese animation to date. This subgenre, aptly titled *mahou shoujo* anime (literally translating to mean "magical girl") is certainly not the only type of shoujo anime produced in Japan, but a recent look at Western television lineups prove that it apparently has the greatest cultural crossover appeal.

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Like "giant robot," "magical girl" is a genre descriptor that gets right to the point. But where did the genre begin, and why is it so popular?

# A Boy and His Robot

Written by **Emru Townsend**

**We live in a pop-culture world that is increasingly made up of retreads, remakes and reimaginings.**

The majority of them disappoint, but directors, writers and producers know that a mix of familiarity, fondness and curiosity will, time and again, override past experience and keep audiences coming back for more.

Given this reality it's hard to believe that any decent remakes get made at all. But in the last fifteen years, two fondly remembered TV series were remade exceptionally well. One is the current live-action series *Battlestar Galactica*. The other is the anime OAV series *Giant Robo: The Animation*.

*Giant Robo* was originally a manga created in the mid-1960s by Mitsuteru Yokoyama, who had also created the seminal giant-robot manga and subsequent anime *Tetsujin*

*28-go* (the anime came to be known as *Gigantor* in North America). In 1967 *Giant Robo* was also adapted, but into a live-action show that also crossed the ocean, under the name *Johnny Sokko and His Flying Robot*.

Japan's direct-to-video OAV format was more or less started by accident, but many titles took advantage of its hybrid nature. Designed for the small screen and often serial in nature, it resembled television; with its higher budgets and flexible running times, it resembled cinema. The apex of the format was arguably reached by one title in 1992: *Giant Robo*.

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# Anime Iconography 201

Written by **Jeff Boman** and **Jennifer Wand**

**Anime Iconography 201 is about emotions.** It's important to recognize that icons are not necessarily tied to the gravity of the emotion. Emotions that are truly significant in a story—the serious cases of embarrassment, love and sadness—are shown in a much less cartoon-like way. For instance, a truly sad character will not display a waterfall of tears, but a subtle shimmering of the eyes. Sometimes even the silliest anime will occasionally give way to deeper emotions; it is completely consistent for a romantic comedy to have a dozen amusing iconic facial features in one scene, but then use more realistic drawings and movement in a more serious scene.

Here we find many visual shortcuts, many of which have also been incorporated into manga. Which came first is a “chicken and the egg” debate. Note that these tend to be used in comedic works, although more dramatic works will sometimes have a comedic component as well.



**Embarrassment:** In North American cartoon illustration and animation, this is shown as the character's face reddening. In anime, the representation is much less realistic: It's often shown as a large tear or sweatdrop, mostly on the back of a character's head but sometimes in front. In any case, it's generally not shown to move. If it does, it tends to be a very slow movement downward.

**Lust or desire:** Sexual arousal is depicted using an interesting visual shortcut: a nosebleed, often projectile. This shows up more often in manga than anime, but the effect can be seen in some of the original *Dragonball* episodes. This tends to be edited out of anime intended for kids in North America.



**Happiness:** The Japanese happy-face expression adds on element to a smile: the eyes often become inverted U shapes. Japanese and anime-fan online chatters have adopted this to create a host of emoticons: ^\_^ is the standard happy face (add a semicolon for beads of sweat!).

**Anger:** This is often shown as an X on the each of the character's cheeks (similarly to North America, usually their faces turn red as well). Sometimes the eyes will squint shut, leading to an X pattern in the place of the eyes.



**Stunned:** In North American animation, a character woozy from a blow is often shown with a circle of birds around the head. In anime, the character will be shown with spirals instead of eyes.

Also look for the **nose bubble**, which expands and contracts to show that a character is sleeping, and the **waterfall of tears**, which can fly out like a fountain or cascade silently down the cheeks, but only rarely indicate true sadness rather than a petty disappointment. Occasionally, when a character hits an emotional extreme you'll see them become “**super-deformed**”: a midget version of the original. ■

# ACAG 2006: When Fandom and Academia Collide

Written by **Madeline Ashby**

On May 18 and 19, the York Centre for Asian Research at York University in Toronto, Ontario, hosted the International Conference on Asian Comics, Animation and Gaming (ACAG).

Co-sponsored by the International Journal of Comic Art and the Asian Cinema Studies Society, the conference aimed to bring together scholars, students and industry professionals to present papers on manga, anime, games, and issues pertaining thereto. The conference was a truly international gathering, featuring presenters from Japan, Taiwan, Germany, Ireland, England, Canada, and the United States. ACAG was a place for fans and theorists from all over the world to share ideas on their favourite art forms.

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Anime scholarship, like anime fandom itself, is being built up by fans within an existing subgroup: in this case, academics. This curious blend of the rigorous world of academia and the more malleable nature of fan culture came together at the first International Conference on Asian Comics, Animation and Gaming.



Negadon: The Monster from Mars

Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children

Hello Anime!

Hakegei Vol. 1

Kannazuki no Mike Vol. 1

It's a Small World of Fun Vols. 1 & 2

Plymptoons:  
The Complete Early Works of Bill Plympton

The Art of Cars

Walt Disney: Conversations

Cinema Anime

Ä-ni-mé: The Berkeley Journal  
of Japanese Animation

## Negadon: The Monster from Mars

Directed by Jun Awazu

Produced by Studio

Magara

Distributed by Central

Park Media

Theatrically released in

Japan in 2005

26 minutes

Director Jun Awazu's film is being promoted by Central Park Media as the first completely CGI *kaiju eiga* (giant monster) film—and it was this fact that caught my attention, along with a visit to the [official site](#), where I viewed some tantalizing stills and a brief trailer.

Designed to look like the films from the golden age of Godzilla monster movies, the film has also made use of custom software to achieve the required retro look of an old film, reminiscent of similar recent ventures into this territory, most notably *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*.

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# The Hip List

This issue's contributors list what they consider to be essential anime

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### The Hip List

This issue's contributors list what they consider to be essential anime



**Avatar: The Last Airbender (2005)**  
 This is a series that is so good, it's almost unbelievable that it's a cartoon. It's a perfect blend of action, comedy, and heart. It's a series that is so good, it's almost unbelievable that it's a cartoon. It's a perfect blend of action, comedy, and heart.

**Wings of Honneamise (1987)**  
 A masterpiece of animation that is a love letter to the world of war. It's a series that is so good, it's almost unbelievable that it's a cartoon. It's a perfect blend of action, comedy, and heart.

**Milnerson Adams (2005)**  
 A masterpiece of animation that is a love letter to the world of war. It's a series that is so good, it's almost unbelievable that it's a cartoon. It's a perfect blend of action, comedy, and heart.

**Clash in the Skies (1985)**  
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# Closing Credits

**Madeline Ashby** has lived on the outskirts of Los Angeles, Seattle, New York, and Toronto. Her work has been published in *Mondo Manga Magazine*, and the *New York Review of Science Fiction*. You can read her blog at [aesthetigasm.blogspot.com](http://aesthetigasm.blogspot.com).

**Jeff Boman** graduated from the same animation program at Concordia University as editor Emru Townsend. He learned traditional American-style animation, but grew to enjoy anime even more. A Canadian who learned American style and prefers the Japanese one. Strange mix.

**Aaron H. Bynum** is a freelance writer and full-time college student in English Studies. He spends most of his time writing all sorts of literature, keeping a very close eye on both Eastern and Western animation industries, reading philosophy, sleeping in and writing some more.

**Noell Wolfram Evans** is a playwright living in Columbus, Ohio. Winner of the 2002 Thurber Treat Award, he enjoys a number of things, mainly laughing with his family.

**Jake Friedman** is a New York-based animator. Visit him at [www.jakefriedman.net](http://www.jakefriedman.net).

**Marc Hairston** has been an animation fan since his misspent youth watching *Rocky and Bullwinkle* and *Speed Racer*. He is on the editorial board of *Mechademia*, the new academic journal about anime and manga published by the University of Minnesota Press. His alter ego is Dr. Marc Hairston, a mild-mannered space physicist at the University of Texas at Dallas. And for the record, he thinks big eyes are cute.

**Melissa D. Johnson** is a freelance writer currently residing in west Tokyo, Japan. For the past ten years she has researched various aspects of Japanese pop culture, particularly those pertaining to women's entertainment. She is an equal-opportunity animation-lover, however, whose interest and research has spread to most forms of animation for female audiences.

**Mark Mayerson** lives in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and has worked for more than 25 years in the animation business. He is the creator of the CGI children's series *Monster By Mistake*. Mark currently teaches animation at Sheridan College

and Seneca College and is working toward a master's degree at York University.

**Jeremy Schwartz** is a Los Angeles-based filmmaker. When given the chance, he lectures on television animation and interactive media. He is currently working on his masters degree in animation at the California Institute of the Arts.

**Ravi Swami** is a London, UK based animation director and designer with 25 years' experience who recently served on the short film jury of the British Animation Awards 2006. He makes transcendental animation and a mean masala dosa.

**Emru Townsend** sees the connections between Japanese and American animation, stop-motion and CGI, the art and the industry, the fiercely independent and the relentlessly commercial. He has been preaching his Unified Animation Theory worldview since 1989, and is the founding editor of *fps*.

**Jason Vanderhill** is a longtime fan of animation, with a particular affinity for stop-motion and 3D architectural visualization. He would also like to see a

dedicated animation collection in every fine art museum on Earth.

A fan of animation, comic books and science fiction, **René Walling** was the driving force behind *fps* during Emru's hiatus. He now sticks to writing for *fps* and chairing *Anticipation*, a bid to bring the Worldcon to Montreal in 2009. He has occasionally been known to work as a graphic designer.

**Jennifer Wand** is an editor and writer in the Washington, DC area. She graduated from Boston University with a minor concentration in Japanese language and literature, and subsequently spent a year in Japan. She has long been involved in almost every aspect of anime fandom.

**Ceri Young** is a freelance writer and editor with an interest in all forms of storytelling, including animation, video games and graphic novels. She lives in Montreal, Quebec.

# More Than a cursory Glance

Written by **Jeremy Schwartz**

**Japanese animation has enjoyed international popularity in recent years**, appearing central to children's television lineups and receiving widespread theatrical and DVD releases. As a relatively new phenomenon of Western pop culture, there has been a veritable rush of study on the medium. This has resulted in numerous published papers, several dedicated university courses and a handful of scholarly books. Japanese animation is often covered as a combination of cultural and film study. But anime is not film; it's television. Historically, formally and stylistically it is a television medium. Scholarly work on anime is dominated by the films of Hayao Miyazaki (*Princess Mononoke*, *Spirited Away*), Katsuhiro Otomo (*Akira*), and Mamoru Oshii (*Ghost in the Shell*), but these films are anomalies. The bulk of

directors are working in the more "traditional" form of television animation. The reluctance by many scholars to research and explore television to the same degree as film animation hinders the study of Japanese animation by ignoring the bulk of production and historical context while forcing a Westernized view of the medium.

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Anime has received increased attention among film scholars and academics, but there's a critical flaw in the focus: why is it mostly about movies?